# Controlling your Xubuntu system

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Becoming comfortable with a new desktop environment can take some time, but Xfce has a traditional approach that many users will find is easy to pick up upon. Once you have become familiar with the basics you may begin exploring more options for sound, how to list running applications, file associations and how to automatically run a program when you log in.

## Adjusting Sound

By default in your Xubuntu environment you will find basic sound control pretty easy. You can open the basic volume control in Xubuntu by clicking on the speaker icon in the top right hand side of your panel.

The first selection on the menu is *Mute* which you can select to mute your sound. Once muted, the speaker icon in the panel will show a speaker and several dashes, indicating no sound. To unmute you can open



**Figure 1.** *Sound indicator*

the menu again and instead of *Mute* you will see *Unmute* and you just select that. The volume scrollbar in this menu can be used to directly adjust the Master volume, and instead of the dashes you saw when muted, the icon will give you a visual representation of how loud the volume is set at.

For more control than just your main volume, select *Sound Settings...* from that menu, this will launch the pavucontrol, the PulseAudio Volume Control tool. Using this tool you can adjust the sound levels, and click on the lock icon in the *Output Devices* tab to adjust the left and right speakers independently.

You may also want to install the xfce4-mixer which gives you more fine-tuned control of the sound levels. If you don't see any controls coming up automatically in this tool, click on *Select Controls...* to select additional controls that you may be able to manipulate for your card. You may also click on the *Sound card* dropdown at the top to change settings for other audio cards, if you have them) and settings for microphones.

## Task Manager

You can find the Xfce Task Manager (xfce4-taskmanager) by going to the applications menu at the top left *System –> Task Manager*.

By default you will get a basic view of services running, but you can list all processes by clicking on *Preferences* and selecting *Show all processes*. Through this *Preferences* menu you can also toggle the precision with which it tracks CPU (rather than
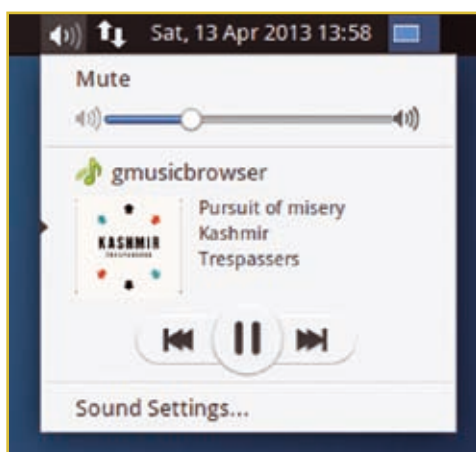
full percentages, it can go to the 2nd decimal place), full command line view and adjust the refresh rate in several increments from 500ms to 10s (default is 750ms).

At the top of the Task Manager, next to the *Preferences* button, you also have a built in CPU and RAM monitor, which will give you the percentage as a number if you hover over them.

You can sort processes by any of the columns in descending or ascending order by clicking on the title of the column. The *Preferences* also allows you to adjust the columns you wish to see, allowing you to add the PPID (Parent Process ID), State, Virtual Bytes, UID and Priority, all of which are sortable. In order to manipulate a task, you right click to get a menu which offers options to: *Stop, Kill, Terminate* or *Priority* which will show a sub menu of priorities you can change the process to from *Very low* through *Very high*.

**TIP:** When you are finished with Task Manager you'll want to click on the *Quit* button, if you simply close it by pressing on the "x" at the top of the window it will simply minimize it to your panel.

If you want to view more constant load usage on your system, you also have the option of adding items to your Xfce panel which track processor, RAM, disk and more.

## Open file with...

Just like many other Desktop Environments, in Xubuntu you have a selector accessible within the file manager that allows you select an application per file type.

First, open the file manager by going to the applications menu at the top left *Accessories –. File Manager*, and then go to a directory that has files you wish to open.

Double-clicking on a file will open it in the default application associated with it. A single right-click will bring you to a menu that allows you to open with the default application associated with it, or with other applications which may be associated with that file type.
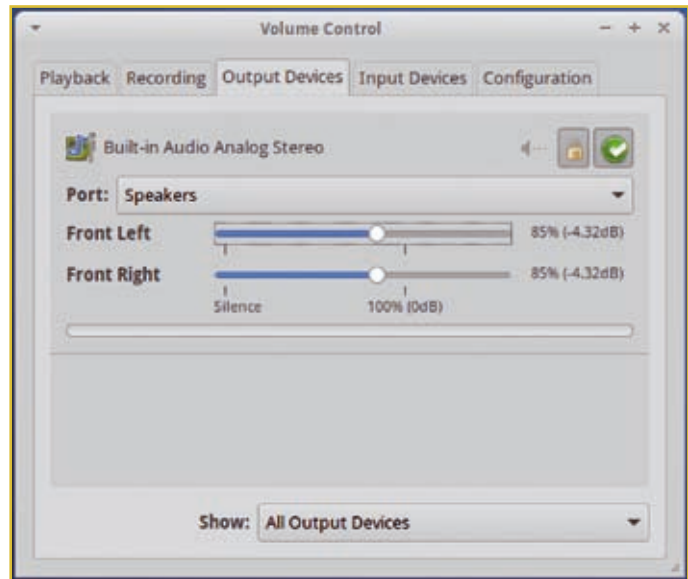


**Figure 2.** *pavucontrol*

You also have the option of *Open With Other Application...* which will bring up an *Open With* window that allows you to select any application for association, or a custom command, and also gives you a checkbox for *Use as default for this kind of file* – so it remembers it as your default preference. You can also set the application you wish to open the file with by opening the *Properties* dialog for the file and changing the *Open With* setting, which will change the default application for that and other files of the same type.

Finally, there are limited default application associations under the *Applications* menu –> *Settings*

*Manager –> Preferred Applications*. This settings menu will allow you to select the default Web Browser, Mail Reader, Terminal Emulator, and File Manager.

## Running an application at startup

In Xubuntu, having an application automatically start when you log in is pretty straight-forward. You go to the *Settings* Manager and scroll down to the *System* section where you will want to click on *Session and Startup*.

Session and Startup allows you to customize the Xfce splash screen, and other behavior related
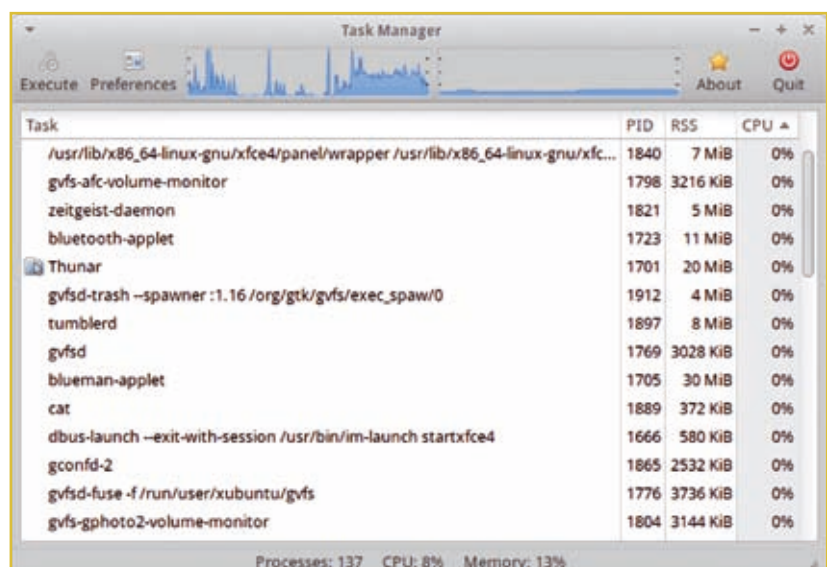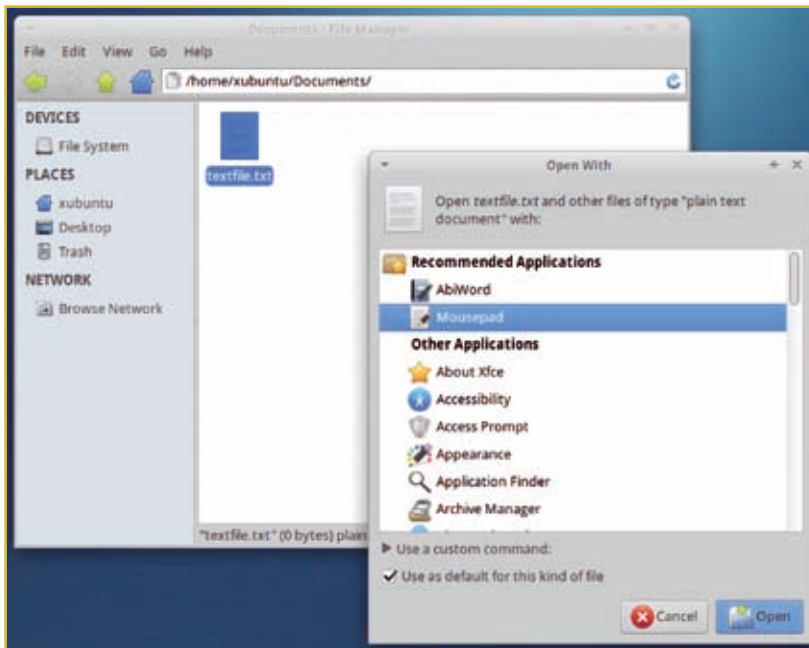


**Figure 3.** *Task Manager*

**Figure 4.** *File association tool*

desktop you will find many other tools and applications to take further control of your desktop. You will find many tools for this under the *Settings Manager* and under the *System* menu in the *Applications* Menu. Additional tools and panel plugins are also available through the Ubuntu Software Center. ■

to logging in, and includes a tab for *Application Autostart* which you will want to select. Inside this tab you'll see a long list of predefined applications that you can choose to enable or disable upon log in.

If the application you wish to autostart is not in the list, you can click the *Add* button to define this information yourself. You can also select any application already in the list and select *Edit* to see how that

is configured – if you're looking for tips on setting something up. If you ever wish to stop auto-starting an application, you can unselect the checkbox next to it in this menu and that will disable it; you can also fully remove the definition with the *Remove* button.

## Controlling your desktop further
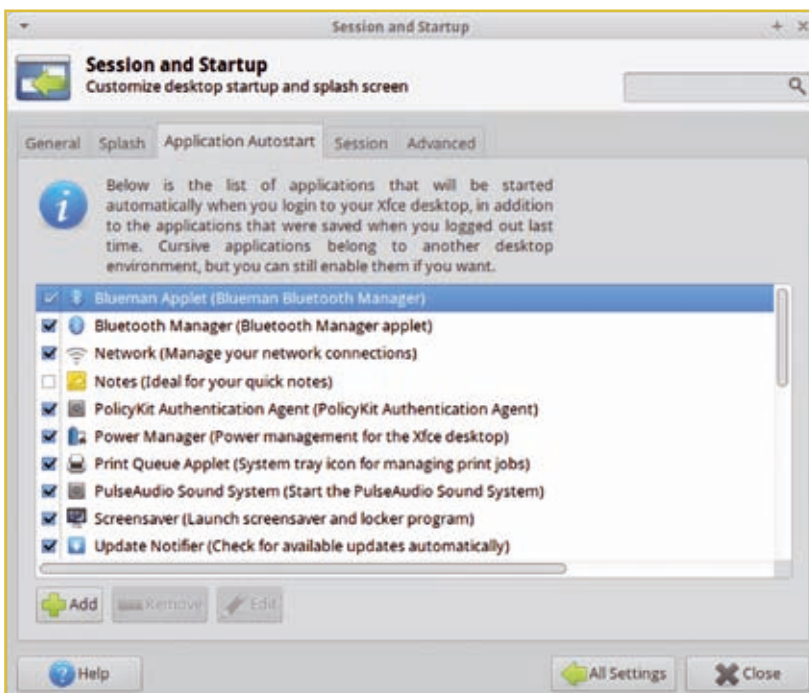
As you work more with your Xubuntu



**Figure 5.** *Application Autostart tool*